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The Ancestral Trail

Cyber Challenge in the Next Dimension

50 Robo, Robotic Betrayer

Friend becomes foe in a battle to the end

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Computer graphics produced by Mehau Kulyk

Robo's sensors sprang into action as the shower of pointed metallic spikes rained down on Richard and his two companions, threatening to impale them.

"Use your force field, Robo!" Richard yelled to his friend.

Moments later, Richard found himself encased in the same translucent bubble of energy that had been his saviour more than once during his adventures in the Cyber Dimension. Teeza, however, was not afforded the same luxury. For some reason Robo had neglected to erect a protective shield around the wigmat. Richard watched in horror as the little creature scampered frantically around, dodging the deadly spikes, his face a picture of panic and fear.

Eventually the shower of pointed spears began to diminish. As soon as it was safe, Robo lowered his protective shield and Richard rushed over to comfort the shaken wigmat.

Tiny terror

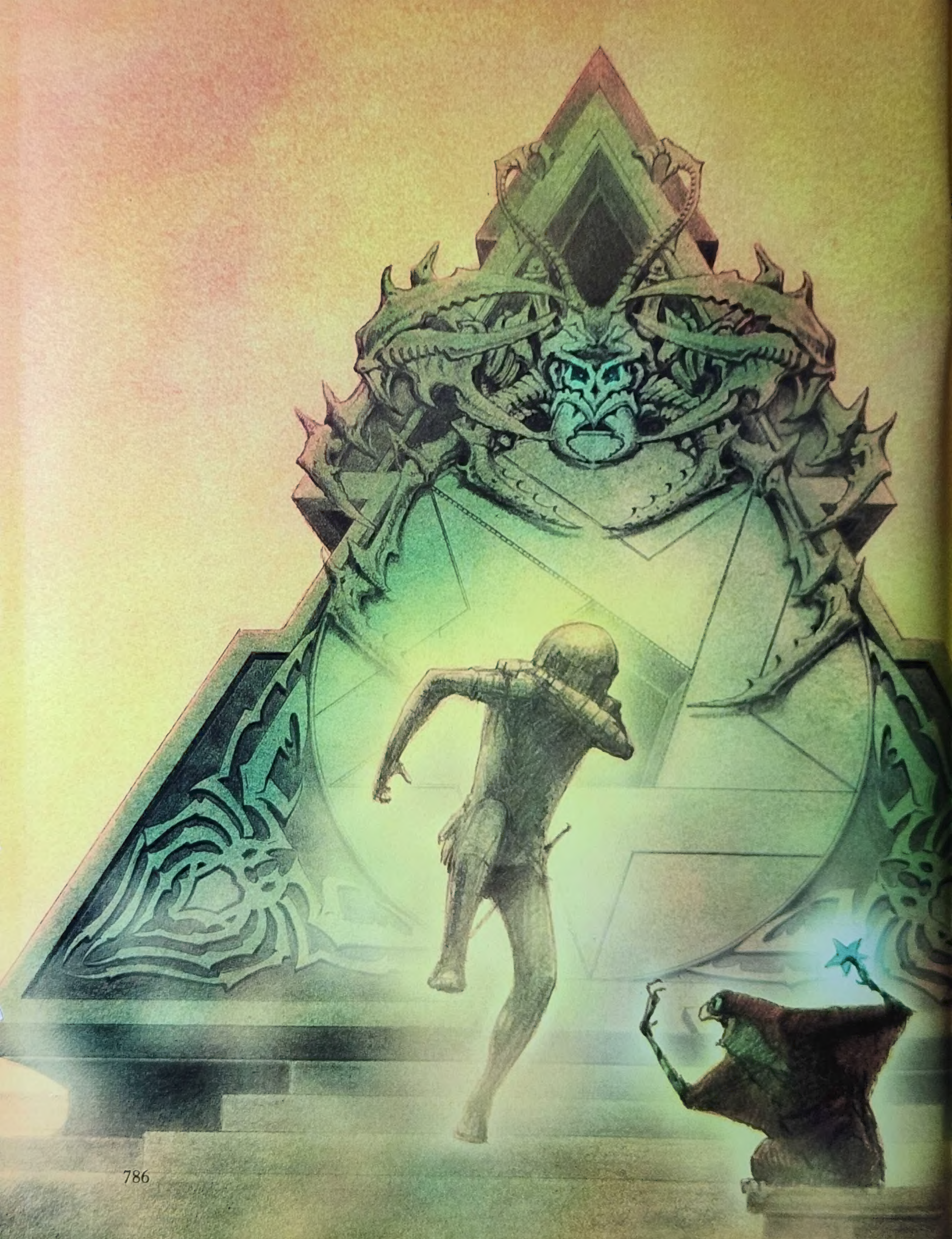
Richard's tiny friend was in a dreadful state. His hair was standing on end and tears rolled down his terrified face.

"B... Badvibe," he stuttered.

"Robo, why didn't you protect Teeza?" Richard angrily demanded.

"Energy supplies were insufficient to waste on wigmat vermin," the robot replied calmly.

Richard tutted in exasperation and hoisted Teeza on to his shoulders. "Let's take a look inside this building," he said. "Perhaps we'll find the last Omni piece."



As they walked, Richard took the opportunity to ask Robo a niggling question. "Where did the spikes come from?" he said.

"Spikes were launched by Evil One," Robo replied. "He senses danger and is watching our every move."

EMPTY PYRAMID

Robo's chilling words were forgotten as they neared the odd construction and Richard was able to get a closer look at it. Pyramid-shaped, it was adorned with elaborate carvings that depicted strange creatures. Richard viewed them nervously – statues had a nasty habit of coming to life in the Cyber Dimension.

"Robo, use your scanners to see if there is anything inside," he instructed.

Once again, there was a buzzing noise as the robot scrutinized the strange building. "Construction empty," Robo said finally. "Does not contain Omni piece."

"Oh dear," Richard murmured in disappointment. "Are you completely sure?"

"Affirmative."

Without warning, Teeza leaped down from Richard's shoulders and ran towards the entrance of the building.

"Come back!" called Richard and Robo in unison.

It was too late. Teeza quickly disappeared inside. "Do not follow!" Robo ordered. "There is evil within."

Unsure of what to do next, Richard waited for a few moments. His relief was immense when Teeza's tiny figure emerged from the building at last. The wigmat was clutching something shiny in his hand. "Omni piece," he said cheerfully, holding a star-shaped object above his head.

"Teeza!" Richard exclaimed, a broad grin appearing on his face. "You've found the last Omni piece!"

"Inside pretty building," Teeza smiled.

"I thought you said there was nothing inside the building," Richard said, turning to Robo. It was then that he got the shock of his life.

THE ENEMY WITHIN

Something strange was happening to his robotic companion. Robo was staring at him menacingly and shaking all over. Before Richard's astonished eyes, the robot began to grow in size.

"Robo, what's happening to you?" Richard asked in wonderment.

"Kill!" Robo said in a voice that was very different to the one Richard was used to.

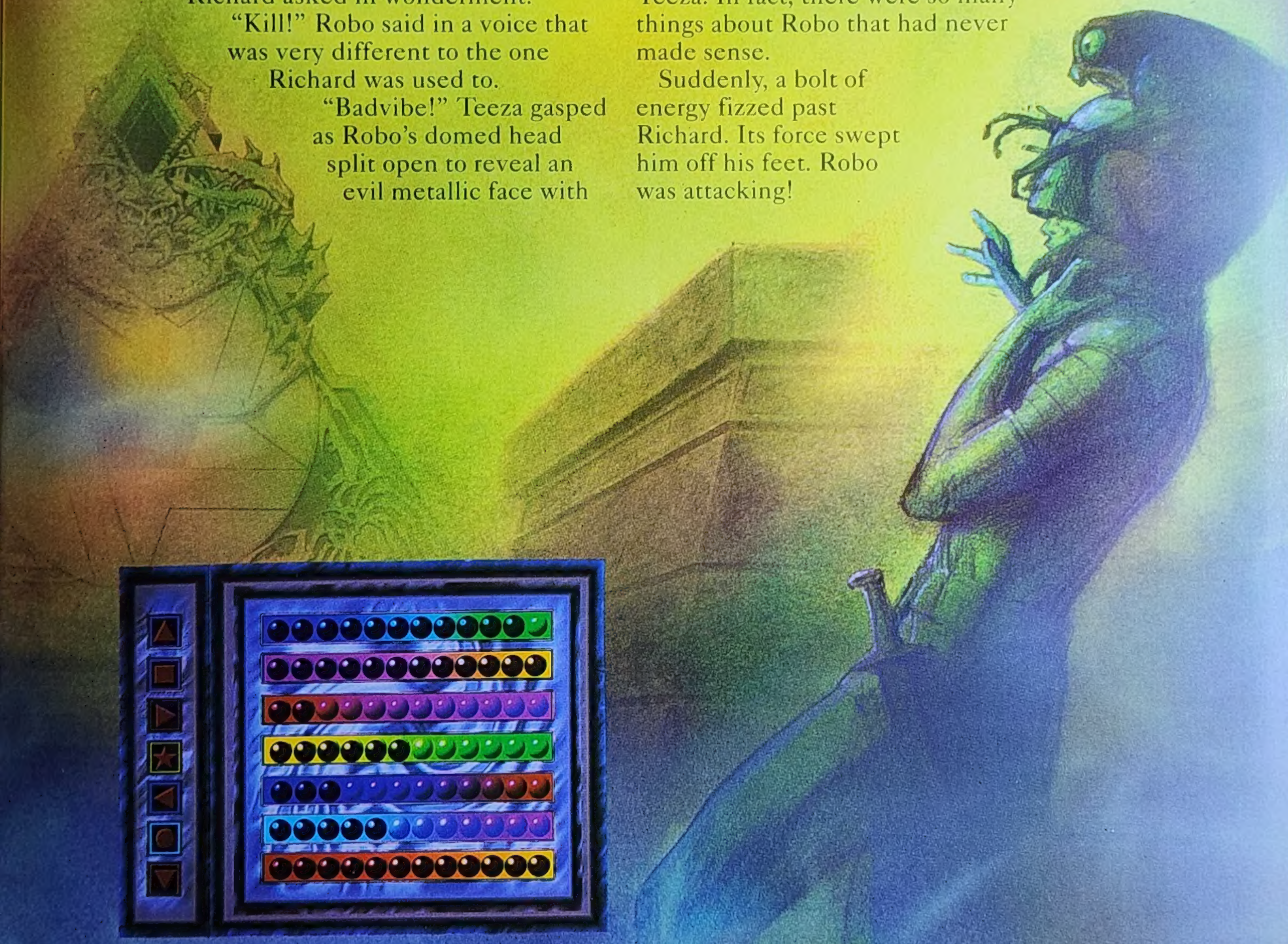
"Badvibe!" Teeza gasped as Robo's domed head split open to reveal an evil metallic face with glowing eyes that glared with malice at the figures of Richard and his friend.

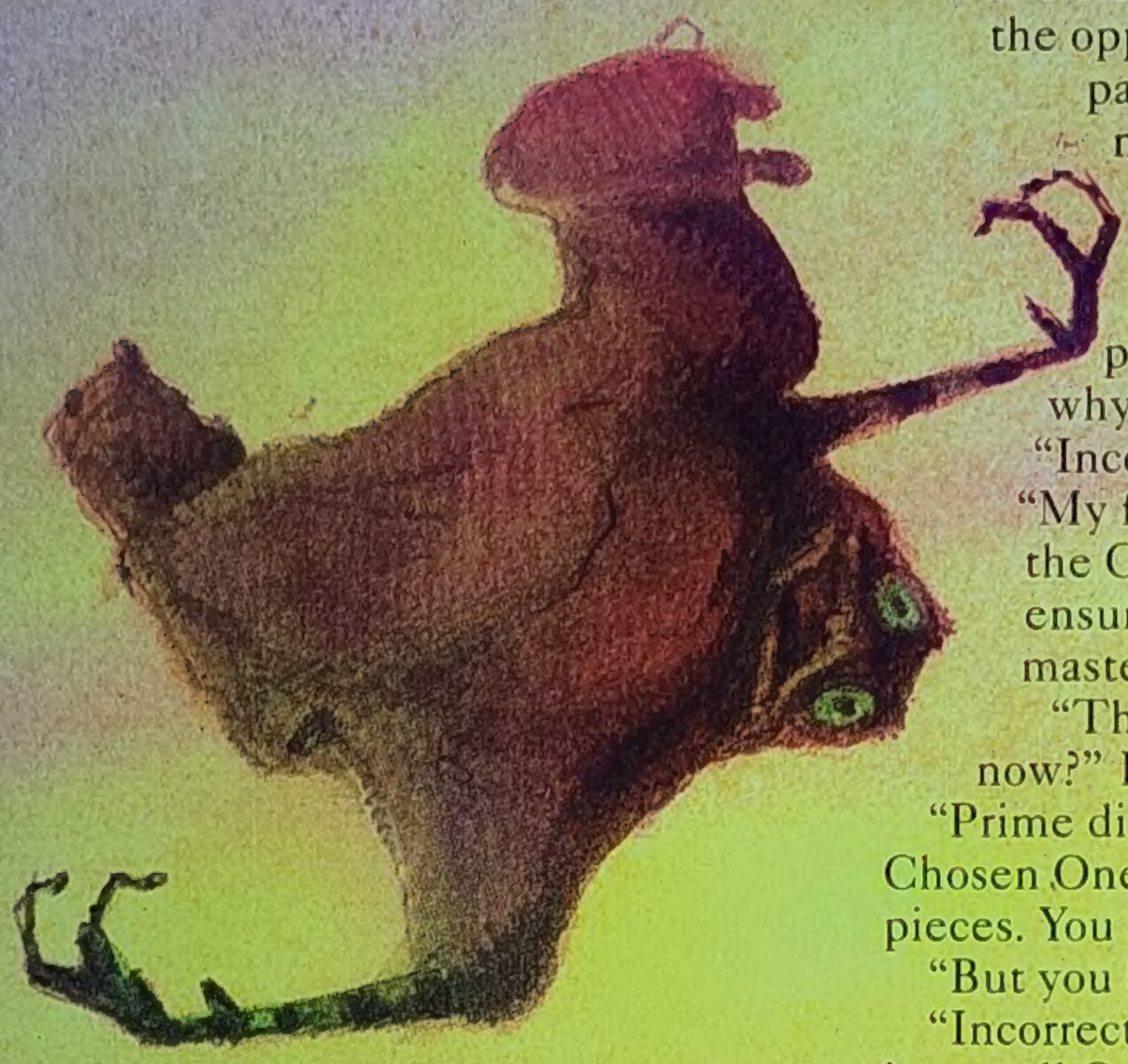
"Kill..." the robot repeated. "Kill Chosen One!"

For several moments, Richard was too surprised to fully take in the scene before him. Then it hit him: he had been tricked. All along he had been taken for a fool. As he studied the new, deadly incarnation of his closest ally, Richard realized that there were many things about the robot that had never added up.

Firstly, there was the robot's binary panel – it always seemed to let Richard know the weakness of any enemy. Then there was Robo's irrational dislike of Teeza. In fact, there were so many things about Robo that had never made sense.

Suddenly, a bolt of energy fizzed past Richard. Its force swept him off his feet. Robo was attacking!





"Look out!" Teeza screamed as Robo launched one bolt of energy after another in Richard's direction.

"Silence vermin!" growled the new Robo, sending the wigmat flying through the air with a mere gesture of his arm.

Deadly intent

"Robo, stop!" Richard ordered.

"Negative, Chosen One," the robot replied. "I answer only to my master, the Evil One. I must destroy you."

Before Richard could escape, Robo snatched up his former friend with a mighty mechanical arm and held him aloft.

"Robo," Richard said, trying to buy time. "Why are you doing this after all that we've been through?"

The robot paused before answering. "Ours is not to question the will of the master," he said finally.

While Robo was speaking, Richard took the opportunity to look at his binary panel. As expected, there was a new message on the screen, but would Richard ever have the chance to decode it?

"Before I die," Richard pleaded, "at least let me know why you have betrayed me."

"Incorrect assumption," Robo said. "My function since your arrival in the Cyber Dimension has been to ensure that you survive until my master is ready."

"Then why are you attacking me now?" Richard replied in confusion.

"Prime directive is to ensure that Chosen One does not collect all Omni pieces. You have been too successful!"

"But you helped me to find them!"

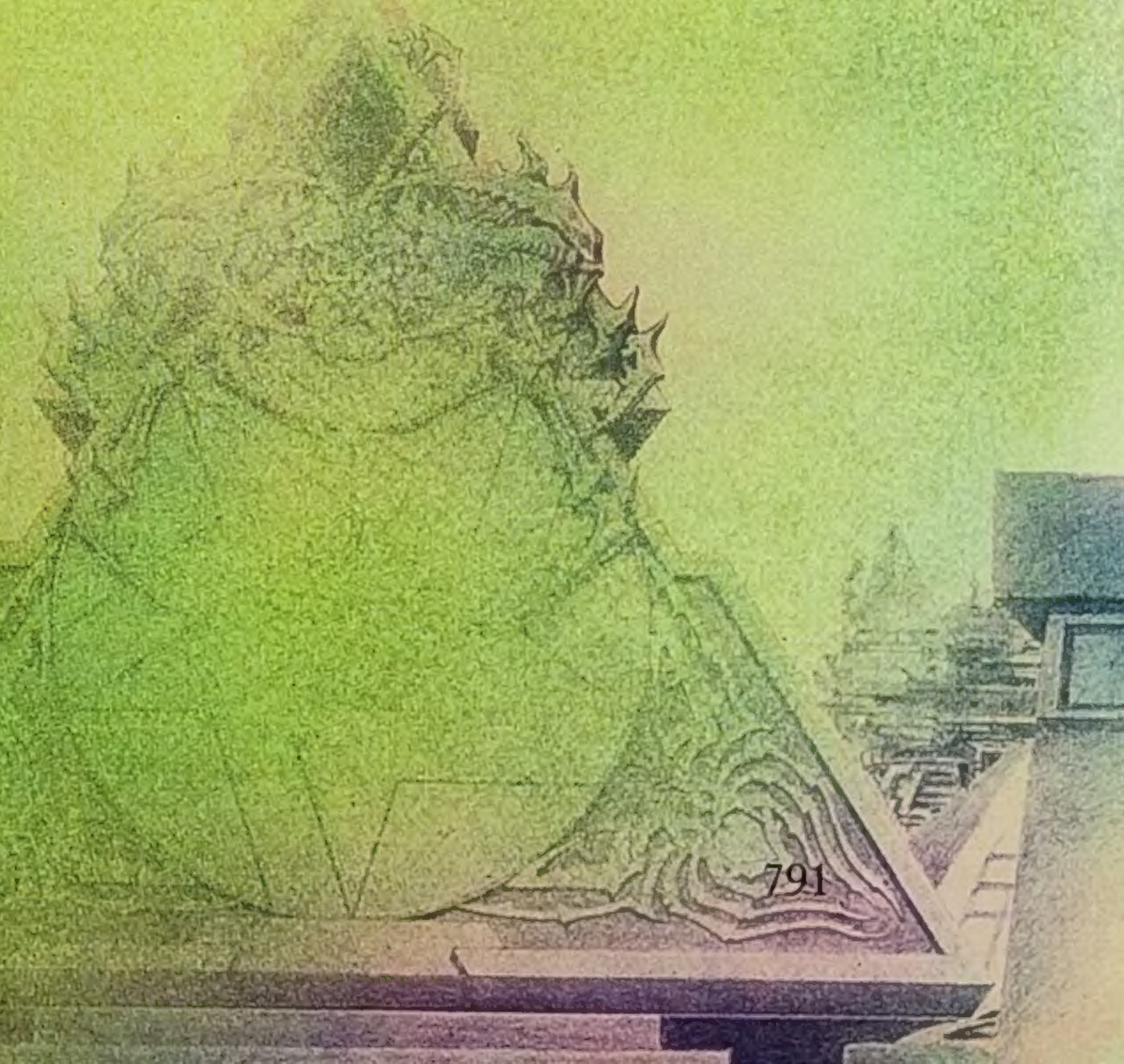
"Incorrect. You were not supposed to locate all Omni pieces." The robot's grip on Richard grew tighter.

"Are you telling me that you have been working for the Evil One all along?"

"Affirmative."

Teeza's shrill tones interrupted them. "Leave Richard alone!" the wigmat bravely demanded.

"After I have destroyed Chosen One," Robo announced angrily, "I will eradicate wigmat vermin once and for all."



Jets of green and white steam began to issue from Robo's metallic torso as Richard vainly struggled to get free. Richard gulped as Robo unveiled another surprise. Slowly, a panel opened in one of his arms and a sharply-pointed object emerged from within. It was a large, gleaming needle.

"Applying poison," Robo said calmly.

POINT OF NO RETURN

Richard flinched. The needle was aimed directly towards his throat. "Robo, please don't do this," he groaned. "I thought we were friends!"

"Negative. I do not comprehend the concept of friendship."

The needle moved forward and came to rest on Richard's neck. One more push and it would pierce his body armour.

Richard looked into his former friend's eyes. There was a manic quality about them. They resembled the eyes of a madman. Everything about the new Robo reeked of pure evil. The scent of decay hung like a shroud around his frame. Yet there was something stopping the robot from applying the final thrust that would signify the end of Richard and his quest.

Feeling groggy, Richard peered deep into the new Robo's glowing eyes. "Robo," he said. "It's me – Richard – I'm your friend. Can't you see what you're doing?"

"Negative," Robo replied.

THE FINAL CUT

With cold deliberation, Robo moved the needle forward. It's sharpened tip broke through Richard's hardened armour like a knife through butter. Richard gasped as he felt the needle touch the bare skin of his throat.

"Robo – don't do it!" he said shakily. "There has to be something human inside you by now. Have you learned nothing since we met?"

Robo paused, the needle still in position.

"Robo! Stop," Richard urged again. "Don't you remember all the times we have saved each other's lives? How can I be your enemy?"

For some reason, Richard's words seemed to register with Robo. The evil light in the robot's eyes dulled slightly.

"Logical statement," he pondered. "If Richard had not saved me, I would not be able to terminate him now."

"That's right!" Richard agreed. "Search your memory banks. Think back to all the times we have helped one another."

"Prime directive is to ensure that Chosen One does not collect all Omni pieces."

"But I haven't collected them," Richard announced breathlessly. "You have some and Teeza has some."

"Affirmative," Robo reflected.

Robo's grip on Richard's throat loosened and the needle was withdrawn. Richard could hear the hum of the robot's internal circuits. It was as if his companion was trying to work out a complicated calculation. A puff of smoke slowly emerged from his outer shell.

INNER CONFLICT

Richard's instincts told him that the robot was very confused. Robo was caught in a conflict of interests. He must carry out his programmed orders, but at the same time he could not forget the bonds of friendship that had been formed with his victim.

"That's right!" Richard urged. "Fight against your orders from the Evil One!"

All at once, something seemed to explode within Robo. A flash of light lit up the surrounding area.

"Cannot terminate Chosen One," Robo announced. His voice had changed again. Now he sounded almost human. "Richard is my friend!" Robo gently lowered his companion to the ground.

"Nicecool!" Teeza yelled.

"Impossible to complete Evil One's commands," the robot continued in his new voice. "Must erase prime directive. Will purge memory banks."

A series of digital beeps came from Robo's interior circuitry. He began to change appearance again. He was reverting back to his original self. The evil head disappeared back into its domed housing, which slowly closed up.

Back to normal

Richard took a long look at his former friend. He was overjoyed to see that the evil Robo had vanished. In his place was the dumpy little robot that Richard knew so well.

"Files erased," Robo proclaimed. "No longer under control of Evil One."

It was Teeza who spoke next. "Robo and Teeza friends," said the wigmat, extending a stubby hand towards the robot.

"Affirmative," Robo replied.

Richard heaved a sigh of relief. "Can you try and explain to me exactly what has been happening?" he inquired of Robo.

"Certainly," Robo said, sounding more human all the time. "My former master, the Evil One, programmed me to spy on you until he was ready to destroy you."

"What do you mean?"

"I was to follow your every move and ensure that you located all the Omni pieces but did not use them. They are very powerful."

"What is their function?"

THE END OF THE QUEST?

"Once assembled, they are able to open gateways to other dimensions. You can use them to return home, but the Evil One will use them to enter other worlds and enslave their peoples."

Richard pulled himself upright and regarded the robot gravely. "Then they must not fall into his hands," he said.

"Affirmative," Robo answered.

"In that case," Richard announced with a hint of relief in his voice, "I suggest that we assemble the pieces and I'll go home. I'll take the Omni pieces with me."

Richard's heart leaped. For the first time since his arrival in the Cyber Dimension he knew that he was within reach of returning home. He held his sword aloft in a gesture of triumph. Teeza followed suit by punching the air with his puny fists.

Robo, however, soon put paid to their celebrations. "First we must locate the gateway to your world," he said.

Richard's face dropped. "Where is it?"

"Impossible to evaluate exact location of gateway. Sensors indicate it can be reached on foot."

"Oh well, I suppose we'd better get started," Richard replied dejectedly.

The three companions prepared to set off. They were ready to go when, all at once, they became aware of a shuffling sound coming from somewhere nearby.

"What was that?" Richard asked.

"Stop right where you are and keep your weapons in view," said a gruff voice that Richard instantly recognized.

"It's a Dark Robot!" he gasped.

His suspicions were confirmed when a horde of the evil machines stepped into view. Richard and his companions were completely surrounded.

"I thought all the Dark Robots in the arena had been destroyed," Richard whispered under his breath.

"Affirmative," Robo confirmed. "However, the Evil One can produce countless Dark Robots at will."

Battle Royal

"This time, I'm not giving up without a fight," said Richard grimly, reaching for the bipix. There was a flash of light as he quickly pixillated three of the robots. Others came towards him, but soon met the same fate.

"You can't touch me if I have this," Richard announced.

The ensuing battle seemed to last forever. To Richard's dismay, the army of Dark Robots was endless. As each robot was pixillated, another soon took its place.

"Robo, how many of them are there?" Richard asked incredulously.

"Impossible to calculate," his companion replied.

Hostage

Then, without warning, the onrush of Dark Robots ceased and all was silent. "What are they up to now?" Richard queried nervously.

Before Robo had the chance to reply, a heart-rending squeal of pain rang out. Richard's face dropped. It was Teeza. The Dark Robots had captured him.

"Put down your weapon or the wigmat vermin will die," said the voice of a Dark Robot. Its words were accompanied by another agonized cry from Teeza.

For a moment, Richard considered attacking. Then he realized that it was no use. He and Robo could never get to Teeza in time. There was only one way he could save Teeza. Reluctantly, he threw the bipix to the ground.

No escape

Several robots immediately raced to where Richard was standing. He felt powerful arms grip him tightly and his sword was ripped from its scabbard. Robo's arms were bound tightly to his sides with metallic rope.

"You will pay dearly for your defiance," said one of the robots. "Did you really believe that my master would let you escape so easily?"

Another Dark Robot walked towards Robo and gave the little robot a hefty kick that left a dent in his side.

"And as for the traitor," said Robo's attacker, "all traces of his existence will be erased from the face of the Cyber Dimension!"

Teeza nervously gripped Richard's shoulders as the three friends were escorted away.

"Don't worry," Richard said to the trembling wigmat. "We'll find a way to escape."

"Don't count on it," rasped one of his captors. "Where you are going, no one ever gets out alive."

"Where might that be?" Richard asked defiantly.

There was no reply. Instead, the Dark Robots began to laugh.

SHOOMI'S SANCTUARY

Enter into the Cyber Dimension and engage optical recognition to find...

▶ Shoomi and Shoobi

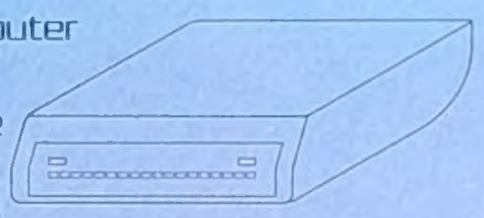
Richard's elusive little friends are still following his every move. They are hidden away somewhere in this issue. Can you spot them in under three minutes?

In issue 49 Shoomi and Shoobi were on page 771.

▶ Computer Challenge

Hidden somewhere in this issue is a vitally important computer component from the sinister Cyber Dimension. Use your visual skills to help Richard, Robo and Teeza locate it in less than three minutes.

When you have discovered the component's hiding place, can you guess what it is and what its function might be?



In the last issue a computer modem was hidden on page 770. Modems (the word comes from MOdulator-DEModulator) connect computers to other computers by telephone. Computer data is a digital signal. To send it down a telephone line, it must be changed by a modem into an analogue form that a telephone can handle. Two notes are used to represent a pulse and the absence of a pulse. This is called modulation. The notes are received by another modem at the other end and demodulated – changed back into computer data.

▶ Competition Details

In some issues you will find letter blocks. Cut these out and keep them safe. When you have collected 26 letter blocks, you will be given a clue which will help you form them into a sentence that reveals the fatal flaw in the Cyber Dimension. The prize for the competition is a super Sega Mega Drive, complete with a copy of the great new role-playing game Shining Force.

Details on how to enter the competition will be given in a later issue.

NB The competition will be open to residents of the UK and Eire only.

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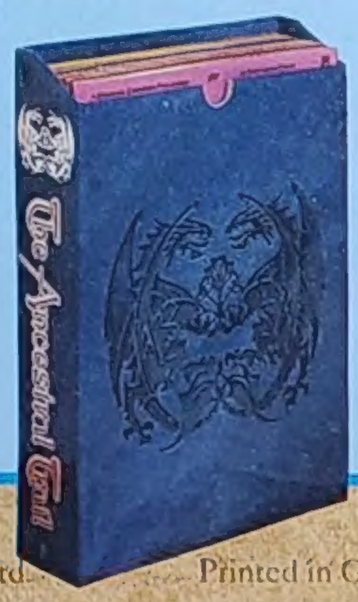

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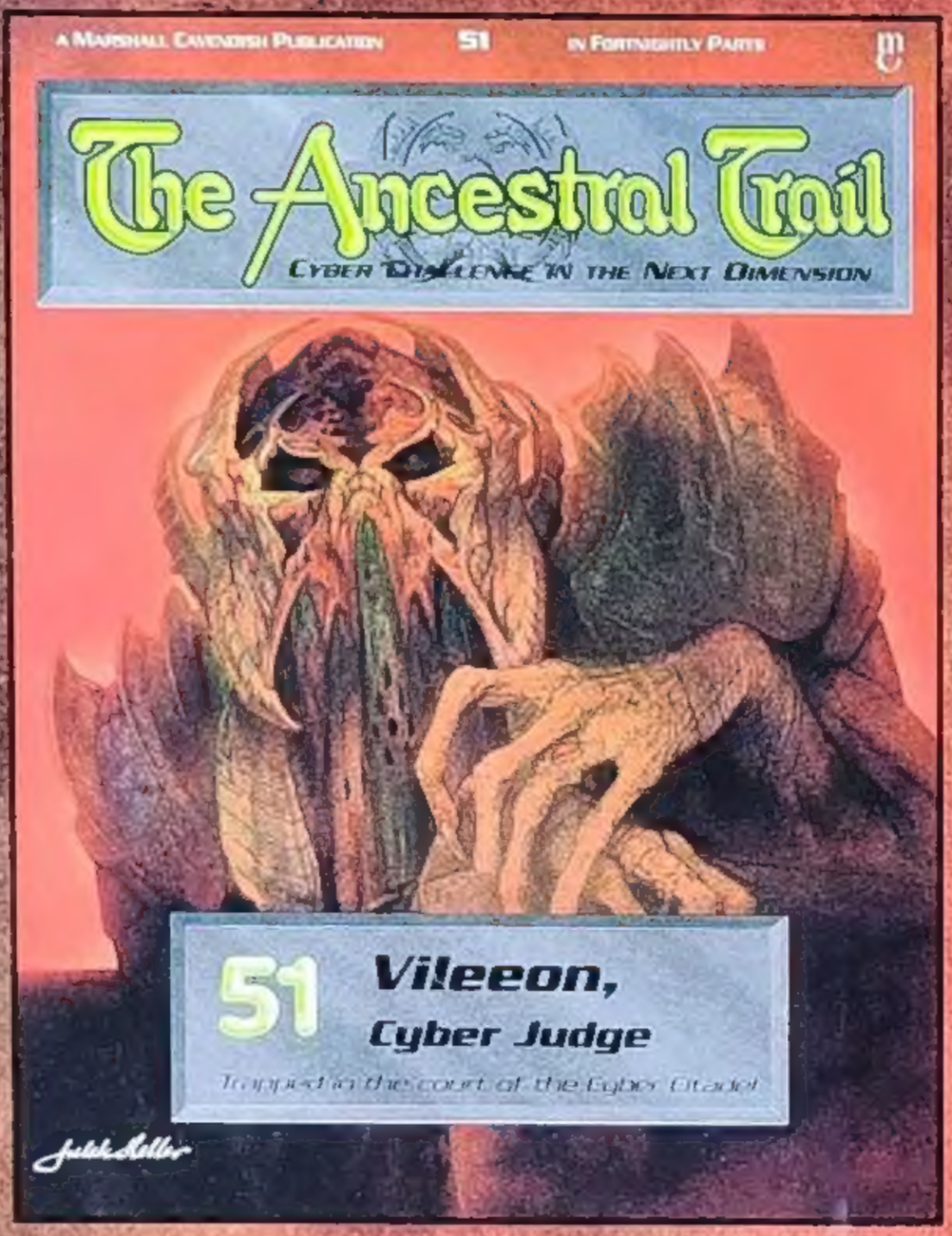

In Issue 51

Vileeon,
Cyber Judge

Richard and Robo are put on trial in a cyber court. The evil judge sentences them both to death and this time there is no escape. Is this really the end for Richard and his friend?

plus

- More **Techscan** cards
- **4 Cyber Cards** for you to cut out and keep

Coming in Issue 52
The Evil One

The battle between light and darkness reaches its conclusion. Can Richard overcome his fiercest opponent and finally return home?

plus

2 **Techscan** cards ▶ **Cyber Power** card
▶ The final **Cyber Chess** pieces.

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